

Shrewsbury Commission on Disabilities
Minutes of May 9, 2006

Members In Attendance

Keith Willette, Chair
Moirra Miller
Jerry Berrier
Loretta Henry
Michael Hale, Assistant Town Manager

Excused Members

Barbara Smith
Dan Morgado

Guest

Joy & Eric Rehfeld and young people from Seven Hills Foundation

The meeting was called to order by Keith Willette at 7:00 pm in Meeting Room A at Town Hall. Loretta Henry motioned to approve the minutes of March 14, 2006 and was seconded by Jerry Berrier.

Town Liason Report

Mr. Hale reported the following:

1. A request from the Chief of Police asking the Commission's input regarding the fine assessed people who park in handicap parking spaces without showing the handicap placard. The current bylaw calls for a \$100.00 fine. Apparently there are instances where the violator has a placard but forgot to bring it, used a different car, etc. Should the bylaw be changed to reduce the fine to \$25.00 if the violator brings the placard to the police station when paying the fine? After discussion, the Commission believes that the current bylaw is appropriate and does not recommend any changes.
2. Mr. Hale reported that a resident had made an inquiry regarding the handicap parking spaces at the Shell gas and convenience store station located on Maple Avenue. The concern is with the space designate on the north side of the building along Maple Ave. The space is not well marked and located near the air and vacuum machines. Thus, people often park in the space without realizing that

it is designated as a handicap parking space. There is a second space located on the south side of the building but there may be an issue adding a second spot to that location. It appears that the station management is trying to accommodate customers with disabilities since they also have a handicap designated gas pump. Mr. Hale will speak with management so see if they can come to a resolution.

3. The new automated doors are installed but need to be wired before they are functional. Mr. Hale expects they will be fully functional in the next couple of weeks. The cost of \$8,800. will be taken from the Commission's funds.
4. Mr. Hale reported that there were no complaints about the accessibility ramp at Precinct 5 following the election on May 2. A railing was installed prior to the election and this seems to have resolved the problems people were having with the ramp.

Bills

None

Member Discussion

1. Loretta reported that the Commission received an e-mail re: a complaint about the sidewalks and curb cuts on the streets around Beal School. Wheelchair accessibility is a concern. Mr. Hale will meet with the correspondent and review the town's policy.
2. Jerry asked Mr. Hale if the town has an FM loop listening device for use at town meetings. Keith reported that Town Manger Dan Morgado is looking into this but they did not think that one was currently available.
3. Jerry pointed out that the term handicap is used incorrectly in the town report. This has been brought to the attention of Mr. Morgado.

Old Business

1. Keith reported that the new Postmaster General is on board and his office is located at the Postal Distribution Center on N. Quinsigamond Avenue. Keith delivered another copy of the Commission's letter regarding access to the Post Office building on Maple Ave. The Postmaster did leave a message for Keith expressing

a desire to meet to explain what the problem is at that location. Keith will follow up and hopes to have additional information for the Commission meeting in June.

2. The group agreed to devote the majority of the June meeting to a discussion about the Fall Forum. Keith will invite Mary Iacardi, St. Mary's Church, to participate in this discussion. He asked members to think about a theme for this event and how the young people from Seven Hills might participate in the Forum.

New Business

Joy & Eric Rehfeld brought several young people from the Seven Hills Foundation to meet members of the Commission. Seven Hills Foundation works to advance and sponsor rehabilitative, housing, educational, healthcare, social, and related services on behalf of persons with physical, developmental, emotional, or other life challenges.

The Rehfeld's teach self advocacy skills and the participants in the Say What program are learning how to use their voice in the community and where to go for help. The Rehfeld's introduced members of the group who each had a question for the Commission:

1. "What is the Commission's job?"
2. "How can the Commission help someone with a disability?"
3. "How many complaints have been received in the last year?"
4. "Are you looking to get more disabled adults involved in the Commission's purpose?"
5. "Do you have to be a certain age to serve on the Commission?"
6. "Please give an example of an issue that the Commission has helped with."
7. "What can we do if we are discriminated against?"
8. "What can we do as a group of advocates to support the Commission's work?"
9. "How long has there been a Commission on Disabilities in Shrewsbury?"

The Rehfeld's were interested in the community awareness DVD/video that the Commission has produced. Keith will provide them with a copy for use

by the Say What group.

The meeting was adjourned at 8:00 pm.

The next meeting will be on Tuesday, June 13, 2006 at 7:00 pm in Meeting Room A at Town Hall.

Respectfully Submitted by Moira Miller